

So it is not only for humanitarian reasons that I have sought to end the slaughter in Kosovo and Bosnia, to try to bring peace from the Middle East to Northern Ireland, to try to deal with the test ban treaty. It's also very much in the immediate daily interest of the people of this city, this State, and this Nation. This is a different and a better country than it was in 1992, and I'm grateful that I had a role to play in it. But don't be deceived here. It wasn't because of me; it was because what we did was the right thing to do. It is the ideas, the policies, the direction, the conviction of where we're going—that's what counts.

And you can keep America changing in the right way with the right decisions in all these elections in 2000. After those elections, I'll just be a citizen again, but I took forward to bearing this message for the rest of my life. And I thank you for being here to help make America work.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. in the Eiffel Tower Restaurant at the Paris Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Oscar B. Goodman and former Mayor Jan Laverty Jones of Las Vegas; Senatorial candidate Ed Bernstein; Arthur M. Goldberg, president and chief executive officer, Park Place Entertainment; President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin of France; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; former Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on the Fire at the Department of Commerce

October 1, 1999

I am relieved that today's fire at the Department of Commerce was extinguished quickly and apparently without any serious injuries. The DC Fire Department and all those who worked to put out the fire deserve credit for ensuring the safety of the Department of Commerce employees who work at the Herbert Hoover Building. I hope that the damage can be repaired quickly and that Secretary Daley and his entire team can be back to full speed as soon as possible.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on the Proposed "Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1999"

October 1, 1999

Yesterday's nuclear accident in Japan is a tragic reminder that we must do everything in our power to ensure safe, responsible handling of radioactive materials. Upon reviewing Senate bill 1287, regarding potential nuclear waste disposal at Yucca Mountain, I have determined that it would not adequately ensure the protection of public health and safety. If this bill is presented to me in its current form, I will veto it.

I am encouraged that this latest Senate bill, the "Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1999," does not seek to authorize interim storage of nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain before a thorough scientific analysis of the site has been completed. That would be an unconscionable mistake, and I have consistently opposed such proposals in the past. However, the bill would take away the existing authority of the Environmental Protection Agency to protect public health and safety. It is vital that this authority be preserved.

I urge the Congress to join with me in opposing this legislation and ensuring that we fulfill our responsibility to protect this and future generations.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 7231—Fire Prevention Week, 1999

October 1, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Of the many disasters that affect our communities in a given year, fire is one that Americans can actually prevent; and, through early warning and appropriate response, we can minimize the havoc fire wreaks when it

does occur. In 1998, U.S. fire departments responded to nearly 1.8 million fires, with three-quarters of them occurring in residences. Fire cost our Nation some \$8.6 billion in property loss last year, and it took a staggering human toll: more than 4,000 civilians died, and 91 firefighters lost their lives in the line of duty.

The place where Americans feel safest—at home—is the very place where we are at greatest risk from fire. Eighty percent of all U.S. fire deaths occur at home. If Americans knew more about fire prevention and better understood how to react quickly and sensibly when fire breaks out, we could greatly reduce such deaths.

Because knowledge of simple fire safety precautions is so vital to saving lives, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) launched a 3-year initiative to teach the importance of planning and practicing how to escape from fire. In partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, through its United States Fire Administration, and our Nation's fire services, NFPA has again selected, "Fire Drills: The Great Escape!" as the theme of this year's Fire Prevention Week.

Fire spreads quickly, making a fast response essential to survival. I urge every family to develop a home fire escape plan and to practice it at least twice a year. The elements of a good plan include installing working smoke alarms on every level of the home, establishing two ways out of each room, and establishing a meeting place outside the home.

Each of us can take these simple steps to plan and practice our own "great escape" from fire and significantly improve our chance of survival if fire occurs. By doing so, we can pay fitting tribute to the selfless service of our Nation's firefighters. The extraordinary personal sacrifice made by firefighters throughout America, and the dedication of all men and women who serve in our Nation's fire services, will be honored on Sunday, October 10, 1999, at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by

the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 3 through October 9, 1999, as Fire Prevention Week. I encourage the people of the United States to take an active role in fire prevention not only during this week, but also throughout the year. I also call upon every citizen to pay tribute to the members of our fire and emergency services who have lost their lives or been injured in service to their communities, and to those men and women who carry on their noble tradition.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 6, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 7. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception in Palo Alto, California

October 1, 1999

Thank you. You know, Tom cracked that joke about the White House—[laughter]—I'm a Southerner. What I thought sitting here watching him is, we have reversed all the roles in "Gone With the Wind." [Laughter] We're about to remake the whole movie, and it's going to be better this time. [Laughter]

Let me say, first of all, I am delighted to be here. I thank Tom and Jeanne for opening their beautiful home and bringing their beautiful family together, and their larger family, for this event. I thank my dear friend Senator Boxer for being here and for her leadership. I want to thank Governor and Mrs. Romer for being here; and Beth and Ron Dozoretz, and Joe Andrew, for all their work; and Art Torres, the chairman of the California Democratic Party. And I thank Steve Westly and Chris Larsen and everybody else who had anything to do with this event.